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360zine

Issue 16 | March 2008

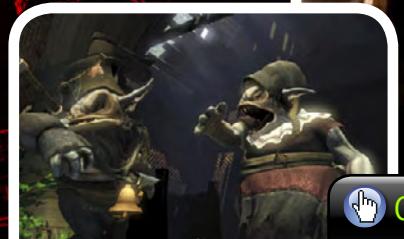
Free Magazine For Xbox 360 Gamers. *Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...*

TOP 10 BEST[®] GAMES FOR 2008



Every must-have game coming on 360!

FIRST LOOKS!  **GEARS OF WAR 2**
The sequel we've been waiting for...

FABLE 2
Don't miss! 

PREVIEW!  **GTA IV**
The final word

INTERVIEW!  **CONFlict:
DENIED OPS**

REVIEWS!

LOST ODYSSEY
Get ready for an emotional roller coaster. 

DYNASTY WARRIORS 6
Hack'n slash on an awesome scale. 

FIFA STREET
Soccerball meets basketball. Hmm. 



| 02

Welcome to 360Zine



It's all starting to kick off for 2008 as this month sees the unveiling of Gears of War 2 along with the announcement of Fable 2 for November. Don't miss our First Look previews starting on page 3.

Staying with the theme of new titles for 2008 we've rounded up the biggest and best of the rest, to bring you our definitive list of the top 10 games coming to 360 before the year-end. There are some cracking releases to look forward to, and with GTA IV only a matter of weeks away we won't have to wait too long for the big hitters to arrive. Take a look at our most wanted, starting on page 19, and be sure to let us know whether you agree with the 360Zine selection.

Enjoy the issue...

360Zine FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of the new issue.

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
360zine@gamerzines.com

MEET THE TEAM

Probably the best games writers on the planet



Lee Hall
What will footy-man Lee make of FIFA Street 3?

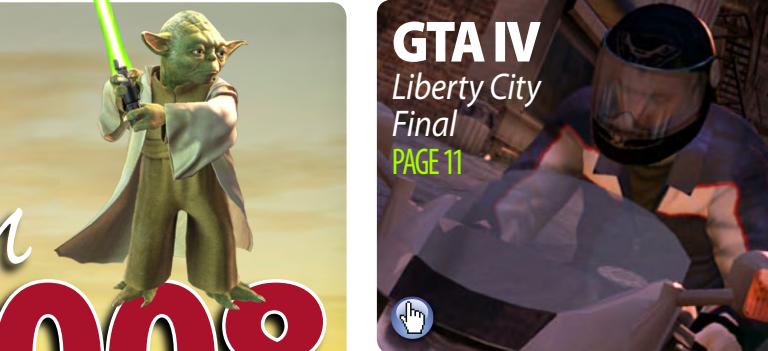


Chris Schilling
Already gagging for Gears of War 2!



Steve Hill
Find out how Hill thinks Dark Sector is shaping up.

Don't miss! This month's top highlights



QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

Gears of War 2
Leisure Suit Larry:
Fable 2
Box Office Bust
Too Human
Saints Row 2
MX vs ATV
GTA IV
Dark Sector
Lego Batman:
The Videogame
Conflict: Denied Ops
Don King
Presents:
Prizefighter
Hail To The Chimp
Dynasty Warrior 6
Fifa Street 3
XBLA

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If you are reading this, then you didn't choose "Play" when Adobe Reader asked you about multimedia when you opened the magazine.

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We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.





Previews



Publisher: Microsoft Game

Studios

Developer: Epic Games

Heritage: Unreal

Tournament series, Gears of

War

Link: <http://gearsofwar.com/>

ETA:

November

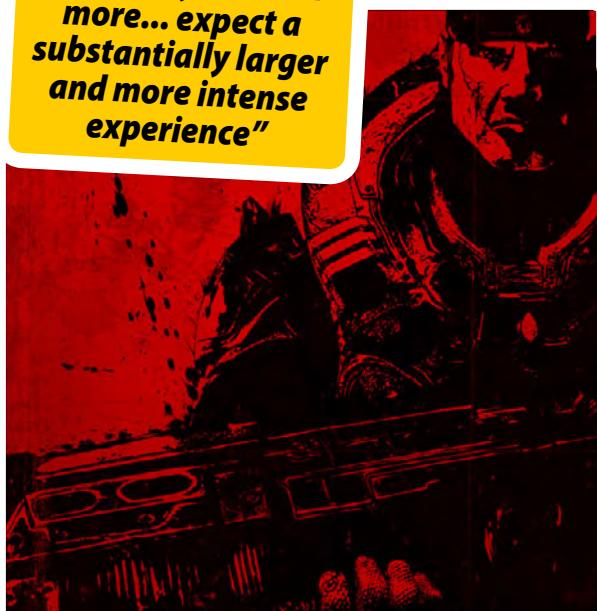
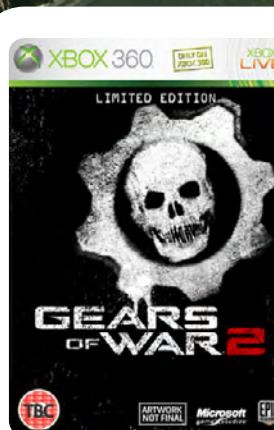
PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of *Gears of War 2*!

We only hope that 360 owners can get to fight the Brumak this time - a nice bonus only available to those with the PC game.



"The enemy hordes are clearly back for more... expect a substantially larger and more intense experience"

Two versions of the temporary boxart have been released, and it looks like we're in for another Limited Edition again. Hurrah!



If it's possible, Marcus looks even meaner and moodier this time round. Your trusty Lancer will clearly be important again.



FIRST LOOK

Gears of War 2

A second plague of Locust

What's the story?

Precious little was shown of *Gears of War 2* in the teaser trailer unveiled at GDC - indeed, the more interesting footage came from a demonstration of the new Unreal Engine 3 technology said to be powering the sequel. Showcasing spongy, organic enemies, amazing water effects and one stunning section with a hundred Locust enemies marching down a road, it might as well have been a demo for the sequel rather than the engine itself. Some new environments not seen in the first game would seem to confirm this.

What do we know?

The trailer features the voice of Dom from the first game imploring Marcus Fenix to find his wife should he perish in battle, before Marcus dashes to take out a "damn Locust" with the chainsaw bayonet on his Lancer rifle. The enemy hordes are clearly back for more, and the game is said to provide a substantially larger and more intense experience. And we have a release date: November.

When do we get more?

Again, we're sure a demo will be in the offing, though hopefully we'll be able to get our hands on a preview version sometime before the game's release.

Anything else to declare?

The press release describes *Gears 2* as 'an epic saga of survival, loss and retribution'. Somehow, we don't think all the Delta Squad are going to make it through this one...



Previews

FABLE 2

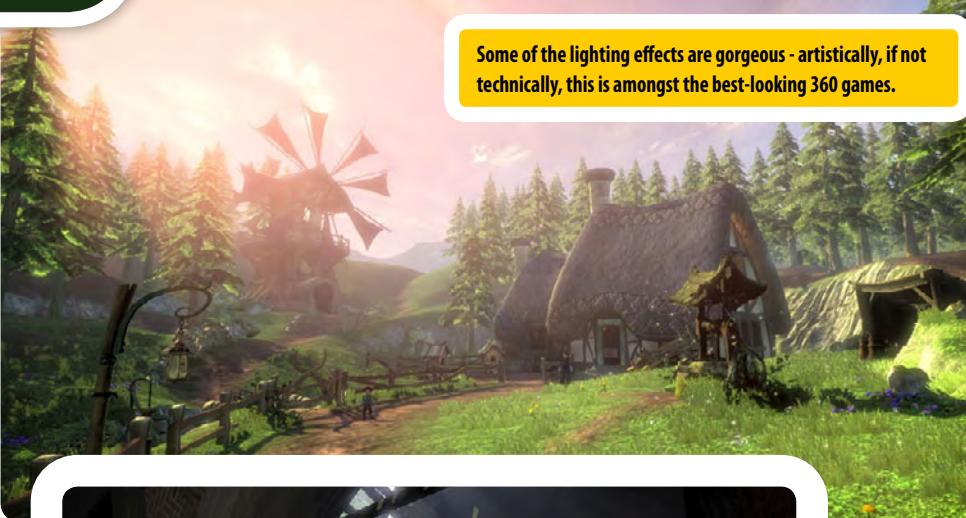
Publisher: Microsoft Game Studios

Developer: Lionhead Studios

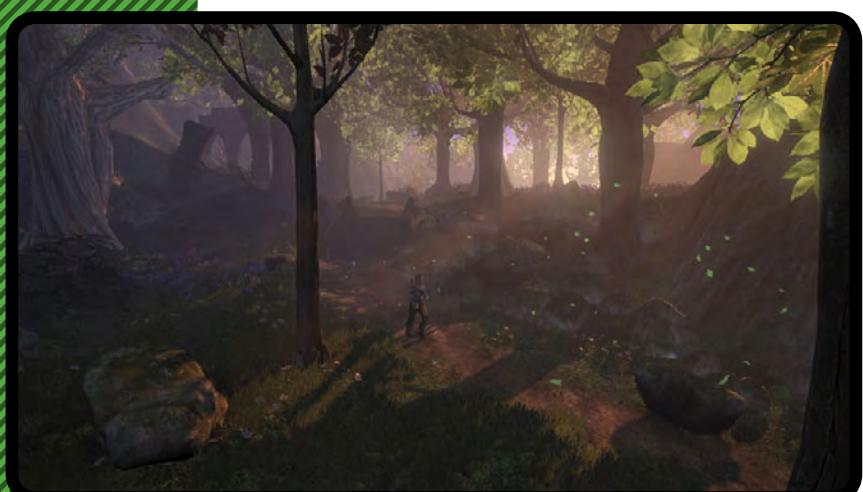
Heritage: Black & White, The Movies

Link: <http://www.fable2.com/>

ETA: Q4 2008



One of the most memorable aspects of the original was its very British sense of humour - let's hope for more strangely-accented creatures in Fable 2.



FIRST LOOK

Fable 2

Mad dogs and Englishmen...

What's the story?

The original Fable was a thoroughly enjoyable action-RPG that sadly couldn't quite live up to the bold claims from its developer. Four years on, or 500 in-game years later, and Lionhead have returned with a sequel to put the Fable gripes to rest.

What do we know?

The fairly freeform approach and intriguing moral choices return, while combat has been simultaneously simplified and given more depth. Experienced players will rely on a mixture of moves and combos, but the timing-based single-button attacks make it more accessible to beginners. The game has an extensive co-operative multiplayer (though this looks like local only, not Xbox Live), where your pal can immediately join you on quests - they won't get a dog companion like you, though they will have the option to take a share of your treasure or experience gained in their world. Brilliantly, you can then take any stat increases, upgrades or items back to your own game and continue your progression there. The idyllic rural settings of the original look particularly lush in HD, too.

When do we get more?

It's not out until the fourth quarter of this year, but with Molyneux happy to show his game off, we're sure we'll see more of it before then.

Anything else to declare?

An Xbox Live "pub game" (probably called 'Keystone') will launch before Fable 2, allowing you to earn coinage to then spend in-game. Novel concept or ruthless cash-in?

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Fable 2!

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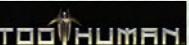


CONTROL ➔





Previews



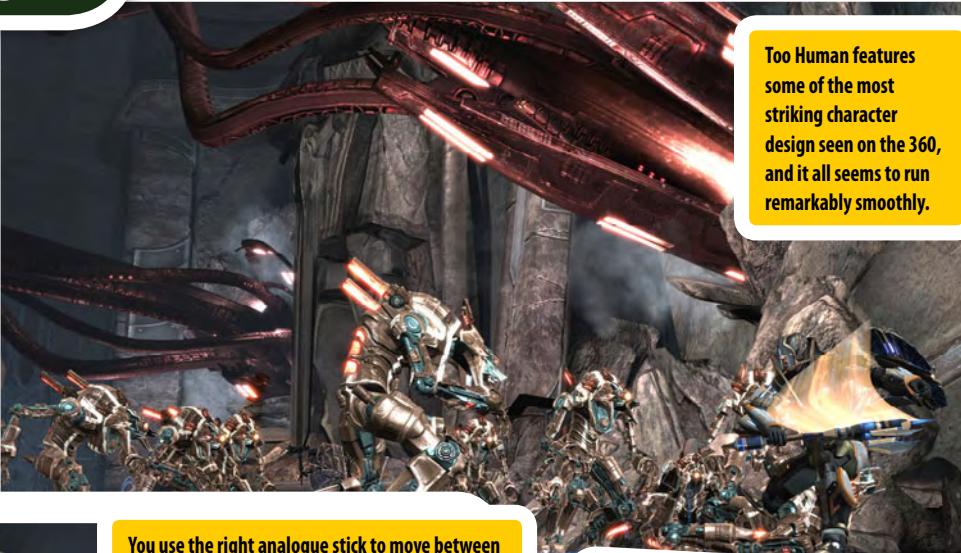
Publisher: Microsoft Game Studios

Developer: Silicon Knights

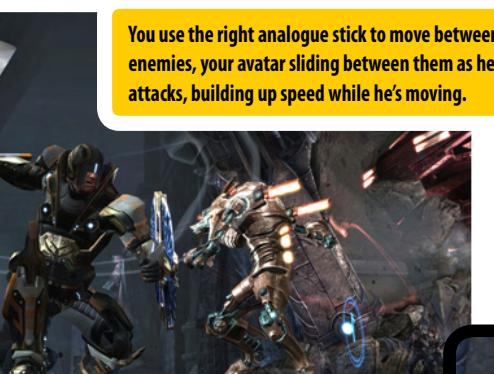
Heritage: Eternal Darkness

Link: <http://www.xbox.com/en-US/games/t/toohuman/>

ETA: Q3 2008

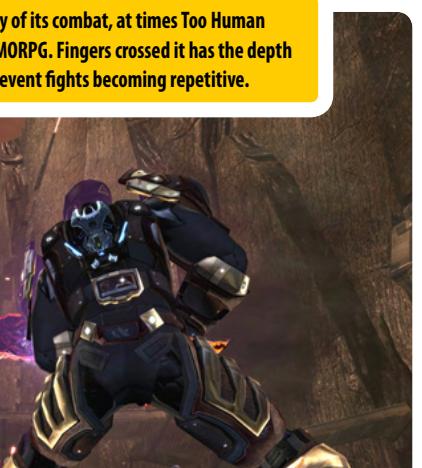


Too Human features some of the most striking character design seen on the 360, and it all seems to run remarkably smoothly.



You use the right analogue stick to move between enemies, your avatar sliding between them as he attacks, building up speed while he's moving.

"Too Human is looking like one of the most technically-impressive games on the 360"



In the simplicity of its combat, at times Too Human feels like an MMORPG. Fingers crossed it has the depth necessary to prevent fights becoming repetitive.



FIRST LOOK

Too Human

Rise of the Valkyries

What's the story?

A very strange one indeed. Silicon Knights, of brilliant GameCube survival horror Eternal Darkness fame, have mixed a futuristic cybernetic universe with themes from Norse mythology. Though if anyone can pull this curious blend off, it's Dennis Dyack and his team of expert storytellers. After a shaky start, Too Human is actually looking like one of the most technically-impressive games on the 360.

What do we know?

It's a third-person action-RPG that mixes the simplistic but satisfying fighting of a typical hack-and-slash with the menu-driven complexity of the deepest role-players. Again, it sounds like an uncomfortable mix, but it works surprisingly well. There are five different character classes to choose from, with melee and ballistic attacks, hit points and skills determined by your choice. Graphics are looking exceedingly sharp and the whole game seems incredibly polished, with negligible load times and stunning cutscenes.

When do we get more?

Infuriatingly, the release date is still to be determined. We think there might well be a forthcoming demo, though.

Anything else to declare?

The developer is promising between fifty and seventy onscreen enemies at one time in the most hectic battle - sounds impressive. And the entire campaign can be played with a partner over Xbox Live should you fancy a bit of co-operative action.

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Too Human!



INCOMING

A fistful of top new titles coming to 360...



Saints Row 2

Publisher: THQ | ETA: Q3 2008

The original Saints Row wasn't bad at all, with some solid mechanics and an amusing self-awareness that bordered on outright parody at times. With a slightly darker tone, this sequel might suffer coming so soon after GTA IV, but the first one had enough charm to carry it past its familiar approach.



Hail To The Chimp

Publisher: Gamecock | ETA: Spring

One of the weirdest - and most interesting - concepts we've come across in a long time, Hail To The Chimp is a political satire which takes place in the jungle. Several animals are competing to become King of the Jungle after the lion is deposed following a series of scandals. With a quirky art style and some genuinely biting humour, we've got our eye on this one...

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to let us know the games you're waiting for!



Lego Batman: The Videogame

Publisher: Warner Bros. | ETA: Q3 2008

The Lego Star Wars games were a joy to play - bright, charming, funny and enjoyable. Lego Batman promises to be similarly breezy if not a little darker - with Force powers replaced by Legoised Bat-gadgets, this could be another gem from Travellers Tales.

Don King Presents: Prizefighter

Publisher: 2K Games | ETA: Spring

With the surprising news that the Fight Night series isn't to be revived any time soon, a new boxing game could be just what the 360 needs. Developer Venom Games was behind the excellent Rocky, and its substantial pugilistic experience should lend itself well to this story-driven, intensely realistic brawler.



Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust

Publisher: Sierra | ETA: Autumn

In the late Eighties, the early Leisure Suit Larry games were uproariously funny adult adventures. A string of poor sequels followed, but now the loveable, balding loser is back with a bang in this Hollywood-set parody. Developed by Team 17, this has cult hit written all over it.

APRIL

- Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway - April 1st
- Splinter Cell: Conviction - April 1st

MAY/JUNE

- Monster Jam - May 30th
- Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures - 6th June

SUMMER

- Prototype - Summer 2008
- To End All Wars - Summer 2008

AUTUMN

- Pure - Autumn 2008
- Halo Wars - Winter 2008

"SLICKER, MORE AGGRESSIVE AND TWICE AS PLAYABLE"

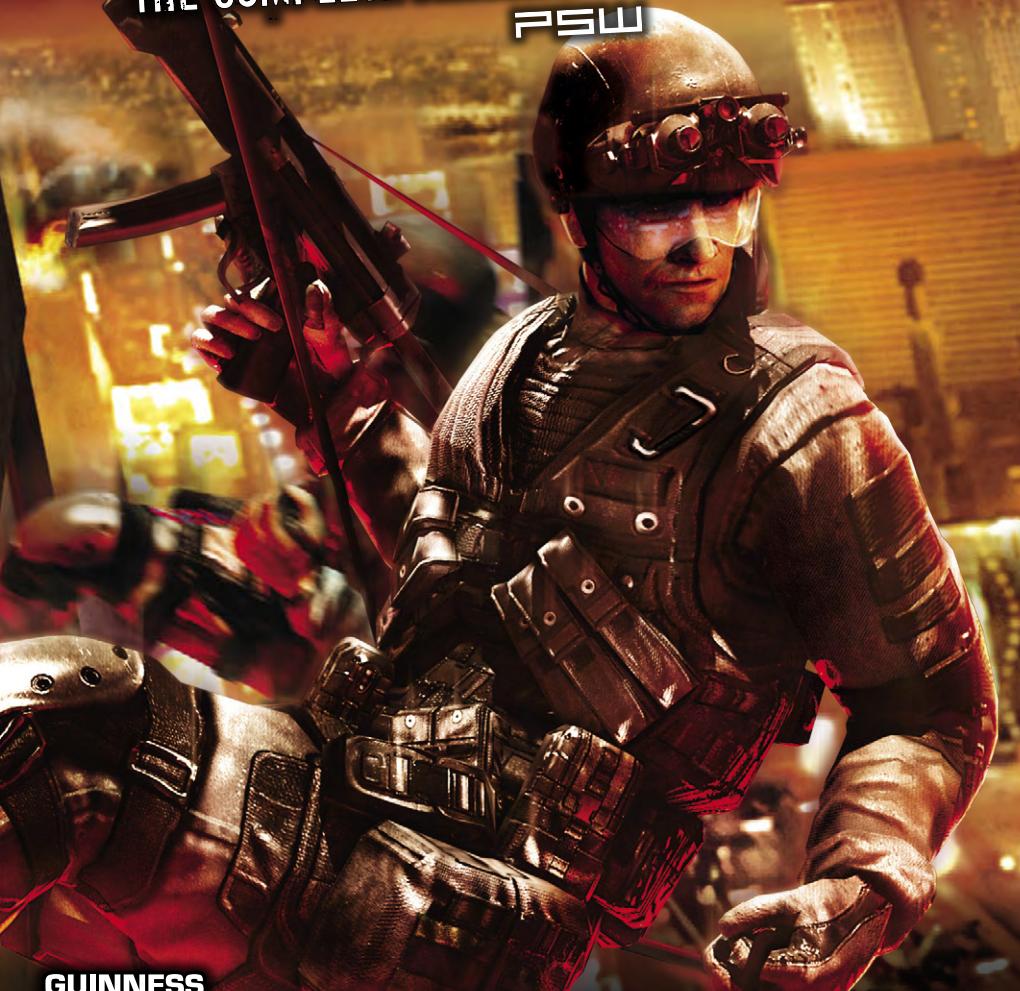
MONKEY

"ONE OF THE FIRST MUST-HAVE GAMES OF 2008"

360gamer

"THE COMPLETE PACKAGE"

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CONTROL ➔





HANDS ON

MX Vs ATV Untamed

Prepare to eat mud in the dirtiest racer around

You'd think that, with seven off-roading games under its belt, developer Rainbow Studios would be sick of all the dirt, dust, death-defying leaps and show-offish wheelies that the genre offers. Yet Untamed shows no sign of a loss of inspiration, with its arcade-style controls and fast-paced action making it a hugely accessible and frenetic racer - one that's particularly welcome on a console that doesn't already have something like the PS3's Motorstorm.

Rather than just sticking to bikes this time round, Rainbow has

expanded the vehicle roster to include dune buggies, monster trucks and even 4x4 golf carts! Aside from having to master such a wide variety of machines, there's a brand new mode called Opencross which should really separate the men from the boys. Taking place over massive, lengthy tracks, they make full use of some vast open-world environments, with bridges, steep hills, rocks and valleys to traverse.

Fortunately, this isn't quite as tricky as it sounds - indeed the longer races are

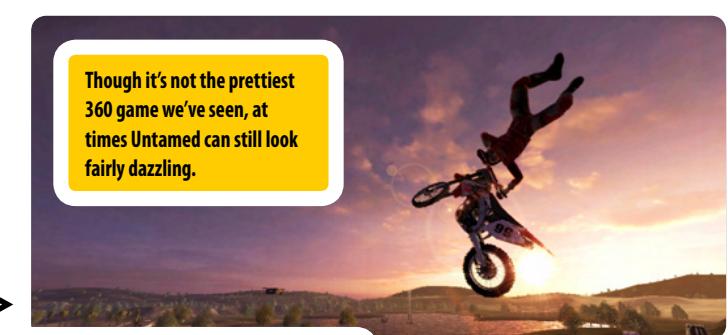
marginally easier than the frenzied MX races, as they give you more time to

catch up if you make any mistakes. The aggression shown by the AI racers is all too fierce at times, and you can often find yourself bullied out of the race in the shorter tracks by your opponents' win-at-any-cost mentality. While this might sound potentially frustrating, the easier difficulties make the transition up the ranks a little smoother, and you'll feel more ready to take on the tougher rivals after a bit of practice.

The MX series has always leaned towards a more arcadey feel, which is a very good thing given the



All the events see more dirt flying around than in the world mud-wrestling championships.



Though it's not the prettiest 360 game we've seen, at times Untamed can still look fairly dazzling.



"The vehicle roster includes dune buggies, monster trucks and even 4x4 golf carts"

The Endurocross events are some of the hardest in the game - there's a bit of everything on these tracks, from rocks to logs to almost swamp-like areas.



The Opencross stages are so vast that the pack is spread out over a huge distance - you can often think you're in the lead, but someone way over on the left has just overtaken you.



Tricks are very difficult to pull off, though thankfully there are only a couple of modes where you're required to use them.

>MX vs ATV continued

importance of keeping your eye on the track ahead at all times - an overly-complicated approach would have led to a much tougher learning curve, and the ease with which you'll be leaping from high ramps and landing your bike safely makes the game feel much more welcoming than more serious off-road simulations.

Each of the vehicles handles very differently, with the bikes perhaps feeling a little twitchy to newcomers, while the 4x4s are supremely meaty to race with. A brand new X-Cross tournament mode is another welcome addition, though at times its events comprise one too many rounds, and the game starts to become tedious. The graphics are a little rough around the edges too - forgivable given the



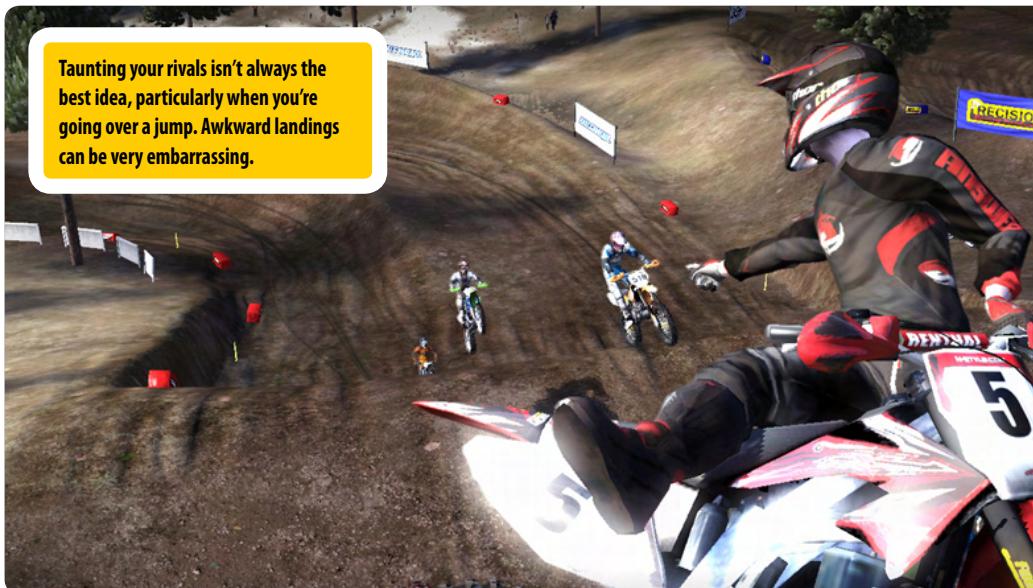
As long as you like guitars, Untamed has a pretty decent soundtrack, with some superb pulse-quickening punk-rock numbers.



relatively low budget the developer would have had to work with, but at least the game runs very well. We're happy Rainbow sacrificed a little bit of detail for a consistent frame rate and decent sense of speed.

With plenty of ways to customise your vehicles, and a vast array of

different modes and options - together with some superb online functionality - Untamed looks like it could be a bit of a cult hit on the 360. Though it could look a bit better, it plays very well indeed, and if you don't mind getting covered in muck or pond water, then you'll likely have a whale of a time. ●



PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
MX vs ATV!

360Zine

MX vs
ATV
UNTAMED

HOW COMPLETE?

95%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

83%

It's gripped. It's sorted. Let's off-road!



Publisher: Rockstar Games

Developer: Rockstar North

Heritage: Grand Theft Auto series, Manhunt

Link: <http://www.rockstargames.com/IV/>

ETA: 29th April

HANDS ON

Grand Theft Auto IV

It's almost here. Liberty City is so close we can smell it.

One of the biggest games of the year - or, let's face it, any year - is only weeks away from hitting the shelves. And before then, we'll have played the final version, and brought you our full professional opinion. In the meantime, whet your appetites with this preview, where we reveal some more interesting info about GTA IV.

We've been told that things will be

different. But for different, read 'difficult'. Previous GTA games have been all about getting away with murder, sometimes literally. They've been fun, light, unrealistic, silly - but as Niko Bellic

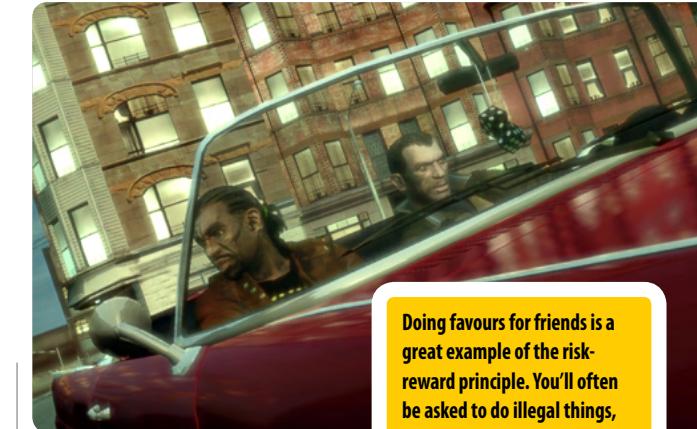
"That all-important sense of order within chaos prevails"

arrives in a somewhat muted Liberty City (New York in all but name), you'll be aware that no-one's laughing any more. That's not to say that the game doesn't have a sense of humour, but that your actions have more noticeable consequences - and this time we're not just talking about the need to get your car resprayed.

Car-jacking isn't just a one-button job any more - it's a case of scoping out a vehicle, making sure there aren't any witnesses (or taking care of any that are present) and then smashing the window before hotwiring it to bring >



Though you'll still be able to get about by boat, there won't be any of the more outlandish modes of transport from previous GTAs.



Doing favours for friends is a great example of the risk-reward principle. You'll often be asked to do illegal things, but gaining trust is vital.



Niko is never awash with money, often wearing fairly cheap clothes. But this just somehow makes him even cooler.



Pursuits are more gritty and intense than before - you'll really have to work to lose your tail. Thankfully, there are more ways to do that here.



Previews



> GTA IV continued

it under player control. It's a wise decision - games like Crackdown have taken the virtual playgrounds of previous GTA games and expanded the sandbox, making almost anything possible. Though there's plenty to do in GTA IV - indeed, though it's technically smaller than San Andreas, there's plenty more packed in there, with a much tighter focus and attention to detail - most of it's just not as simple to achieve without a bit of thought. You won't be buying speedboats and jetpacks, but taking on small-scale heists simply to keep your head above water.

Your 'phone plays an important part in proceedings, allowing you to contact friends, listen to the radio, and even call the police if it's to your advantage. Friends are key - maintaining positive relationships will often see your mates get you out of a tight spot. And everything is just more immersively real - as you travel through the five disparate districts, you'll hear several

foreign accents, experience different behavioural patterns from non-player characters, see street vendors selling smoking hot snacks, and gangs looking for trouble.

Aside from the amazing incidentals, it also plays better than before - hand-to-hand combat has brand-new mechanics with the face buttons used for blocks, kicks and headbutts, while the third-person aiming is almost Gears-esque in effectiveness. Driving feels more realistic than ever - and you can even attempt to steer while you're drunk, though the woozy screen-blur effects and unresponsiveness of the controls makes that very tricky indeed. Again: it feels as it should.

Perhaps most importantly, that all-important sense of order within chaos prevails. Cops can be a help as much as a hindrance if you're under attack, while random chases see you shimmy up buildings and out through fire escapes to lose your pursuers in a manner that almost seems scripted, such is its intoxicating believability.

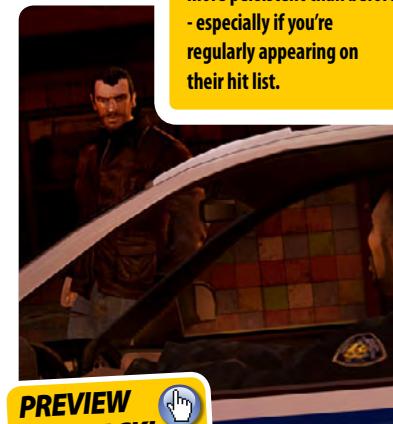


You start off in squalor, and things don't really improve too much. Don't think you'll be able to buy a mansion within a few hours of starting. We're talking street-level, disorganized crime.

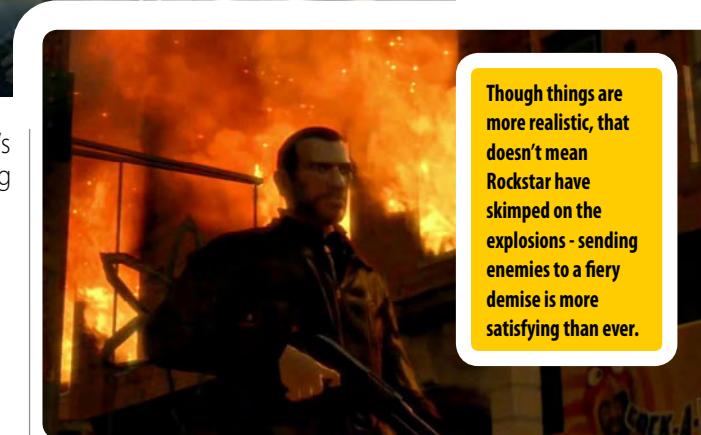


You now have to smash the car window to be able to fire at anyone chasing you - another small but worthwhile touch.

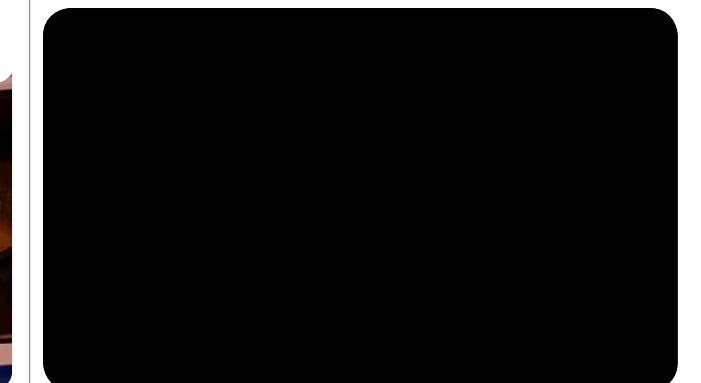
As a living, breathing gameworld, it's doubtful you'll have ever seen anything to touch Liberty City - if the story can live up to the rest of the game, then every second of the next eight agonising weeks' worth of wait will be worth it.



Expect the police to be more persistent than before - especially if you're regularly appearing on their hit list.



Though things are more realistic, that doesn't mean Rockstar have skimped on the explosions - sending enemies to a fiery demise is more satisfying than ever.



PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of GTA IV!

360Zine



HOW COMPLETE?

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

95%

95%

Immersive, irrepressible, incredible



Publisher: D3Publisher

Developer: Digital Extremes

Heritage: Unreal

Tournament, Pariah, Warpath

Link: www.digitalextremes.com

ETA: 28th March 2008

HANDS ON

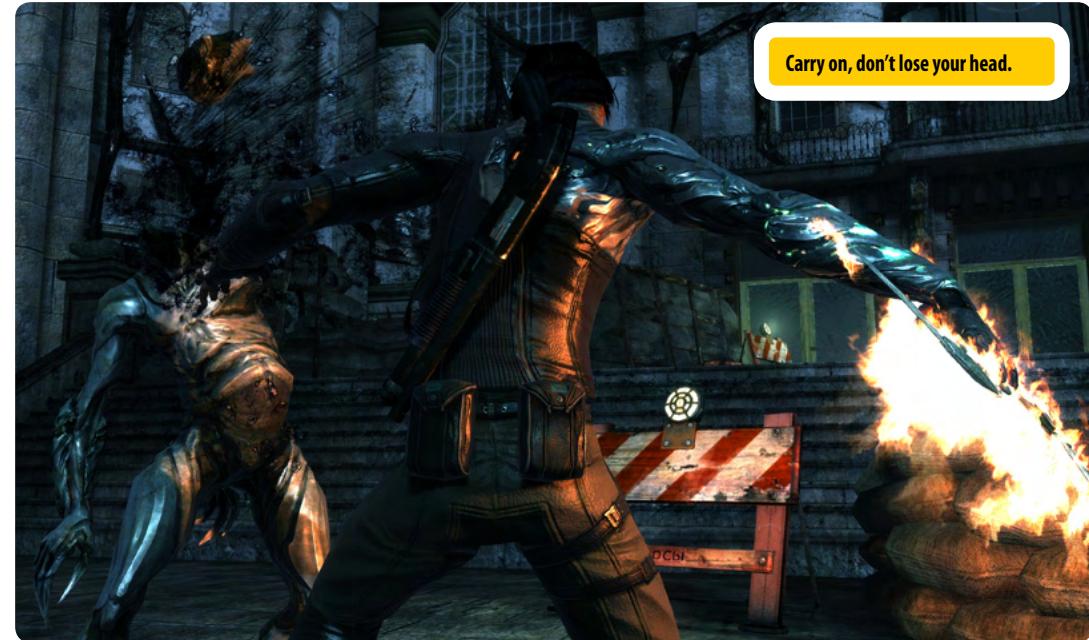
Dark Sector

Step into the light...

A quick glance at our previous preview of this suggests that it was due out in June 2007. It may have slipped off the radar since then, but judging from our recent look and hands-on experience, it may well be worth the wait, finally shaping up to be one of the games of the year so far. If you've forgotten the story, all you really need to know is that you're some bloke who, for spurious plot reasons, has a three-bladed Frisbee attached to his right hand. While this must make various bodily functions a daily peril, in

terms of the action in Dark Sector, the so-called glaive is an absolute boon.

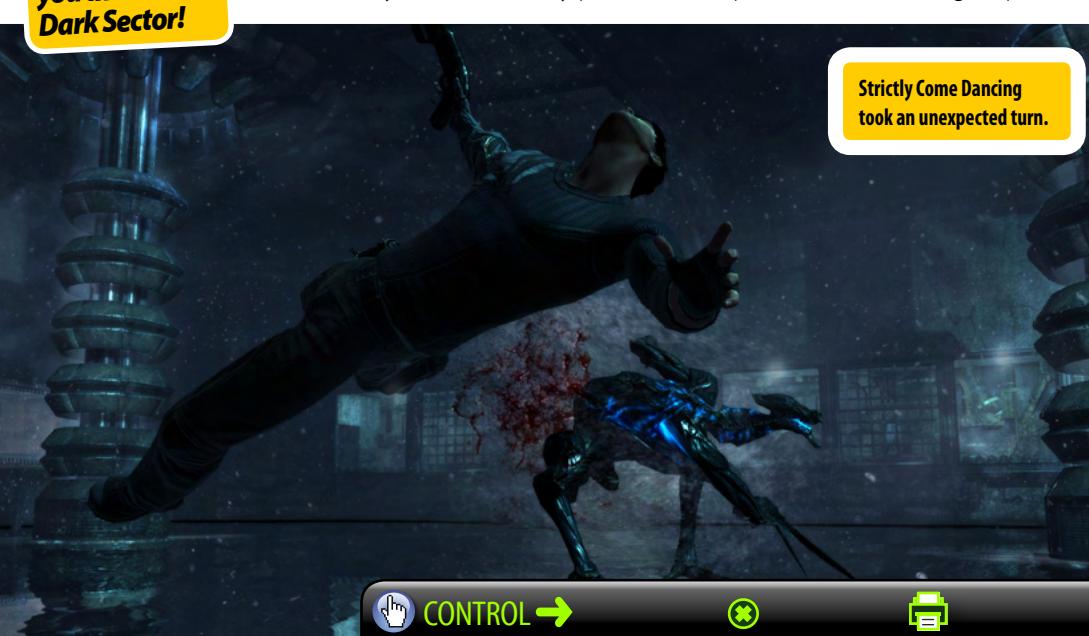
While traditional weapons do exist, the game is largely constructed around the glaive, which becomes increasingly useful over time, undergoing a series of automatic upgrades. As a simple killing tool, it's pretty handy, and a decent throw will easily dismember or behead an enemy before it returns boomerang-style to your genetically modified palm. It can also be used to collect items such as guns and ammo, enabling you to whip them off a twitching corpse



without exposing yourself to gunfire. The glaive can also be charged with electricity, fire and ice for all manner of bespoke puzzle solving, and interesting manners of death, such as freezing an enemy and shattering them Terminator 2 style. And it can even make you

invisible.

As for those enemies, they come in many shapes and sizes, from regimented military units to flailing zombies armed with shovels. It's a mixture of styles that draws comparison with Gears Of War (with a





>Dark Sector continued

near identical barrel run and cover system) as well as the blind panic of Resident Evil 4. Throw in a bit of Zelda-esque puzzle-solving and it sounds like a recipe for a gaming feast.

Having played through chapters one, two, three and seven, we can confirm that it's currently almost as good as it sounds, with enough originality and style to stand out from its obvious influences. Combat is varied, be it picking off soldiers from distance, shooting helicopters out of the sky, or getting up close and personal with some frantic melees, including an old school finishing move. Dark Sector certainly doesn't shirk on the ultra-violence, whether tearing an enemy's

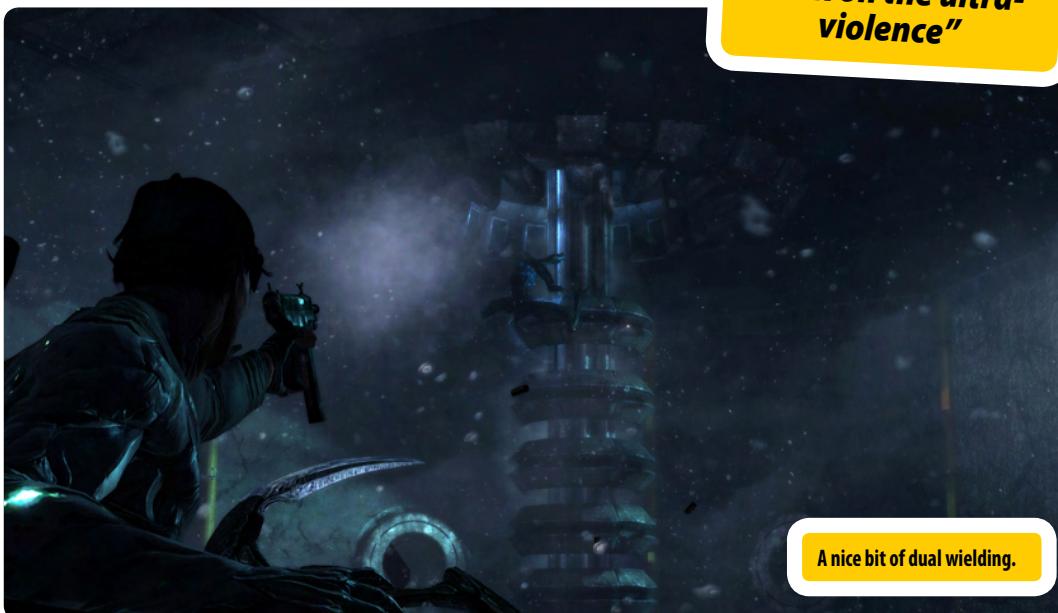


Anyone for Frisbee.

head off, or lopping off his leg at the thigh, all accompanied by some impressive arterial spurting.

The scenery smacks of next-gen, with some impressive weather effects adding to the bleak futuristic cod-Soviet setting. And while the bizarre infection-based storyline, and accompanying cut

"Dark Sector certainly doesn't shirk on the ultra-violence"



A nice bit of dual wielding.



This isn't going to end amicably.

scenes, may be codswallop, it paves the way for a solid 12-15 hours of single player gaming. There will also be some multiplayer modes, but we're not

allowed to tell you about them on fear of being split in two with a glaive. Hopefully review code will be spinning our way soon... ●



360Zine

HOW COMPLETE?

95%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

85%



Cutting Edge

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CONFLICT: DENIED OPS

James Woodcock goes co-op with Pivotal Games' Senior Designer James Nicholls...



Wow the grass really is greener on the other side.



Stretches are always important before a shoot out.

Could you tell us a little about yourself?

I am the Senior Designer at Pivotal Games. Denied Ops is my first Conflict title and I have been largely responsible for the co-operative and the destructive systems within the game as well as the Multiplayer.

There have been quite a few previous titles in the series, how does Conflict: Denied Ops fit in?

Well compared to our other Conflict titles, we have used the new generation of hardware to try something different with the series. While we have stuck to some of the basic principles of the series, we have tried a more accessible, immediate game that will hopefully open the series up to a new audience. Where previously we relied on four man squad tactics, this time around the game is a two man co-op

After you!



jour, unfortunately at the moment for us, it means it's quite a competitive market, but we are very happy the way the co-op has turned out in Conflict: Denied Ops as we considered Co-op from the ground up in everything we did.

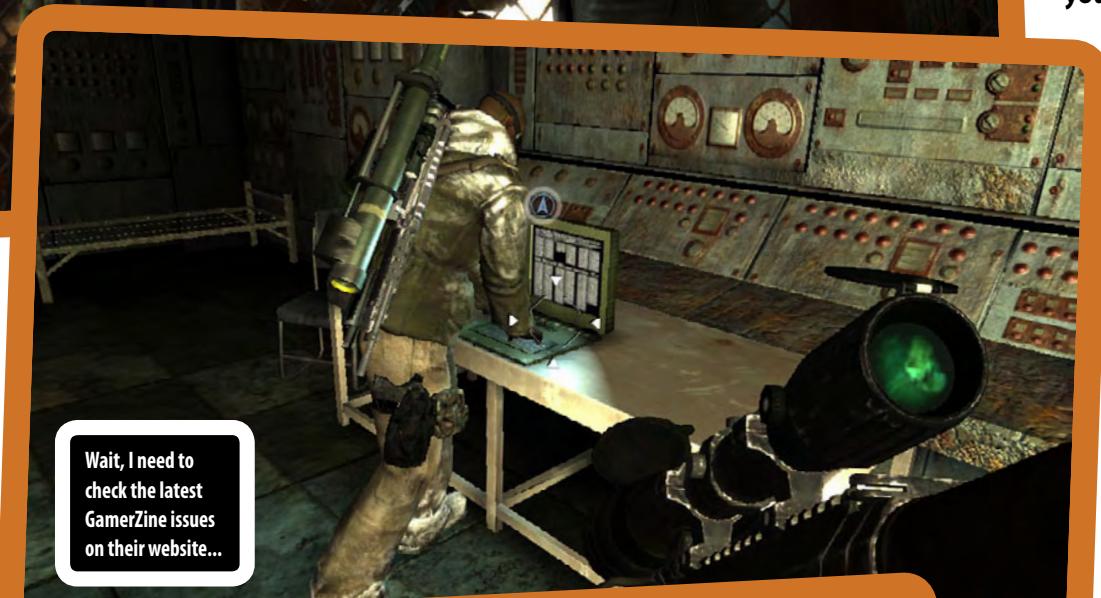
Maybe now you can tell us a little about the storyline?

You play two CIA special activity division agents. They are drafted in because there has been a military coup in Venezuela and the General that has taken control has threatened any international involvement in this internal affair with the use of nuclear weapons, which catches everyone unawares. The US can't risk being directly involved with a military intervention, so they send in their special activities division, which is a branch of the CIA, which is completely deniable, hence the name of the game.

For a gameplay point of view, that means you are not bound by the same rules of military engagement as you normally would be, so you can rip up a level if you want to and you won't be held accountable at the end. It also means you are also very much on



Watch where you are pointing that thing!



Wait, I need to check the latest GamerZine issues on their website...

"Rip up a level if you want to - you won't be held accountable at the end"

> Interview continued

your own.

These two guys are going in to Venezuela to find out where these threats of use of nuclear arms are coming from and then they can follow one of three lines of investigation after this first mission, chasing them around the globe, which takes them through Africa, Russia, the Arctic Circle and all kinds of worldwide locations.

How do the levels progress, can you take different routes?

Yes absolutely! As I say, after the first mission there are three lines of investigation opened up. The player is free to choose what order they do those in. What is quite nice though is that we have an unlock system for weapons, which happens at the end of each mission, so if you are finding there is one mission you are perhaps finding a bit difficult, you can stop and go down another route, maybe get some better weaponry and then come back and try that mission again.

We have called it flexible mission flow, a system of being able to pick multiple routes of the story and it does offer players some nice easy choices to make in the story in how it pans out.

Why the change to first person view, which in previous titles was played out in third?

What we are trying to do with our next gen version of the Conflict games is to try and make things much more accessible. We wanted to be able to put a pad in the hands of a fairly new player, someone who probably is loosely familiar with first person shooters or shooters in general on a console, but who is not perhaps a military nut. Then they are going to be able to pick up, enjoy and play the game.

We found that Conflict titles were getting increasingly complex and that gamers were struggling with the controls such that it would take a good hour or so before they would start to really get into the swing of things. So we wanted to try something different with this title and have a really accessible control system that people could pick up and play. We felt that the first person shooters side of things was part and parcel of that. It is such an established genre. You know immediately whether you are using a sniper rifle or heavy machine gun.

What is Puncture Technology?

It allows you to shoot an arbitrary hole in any thin surface, so if you come across plaster, thin wood or glass, you can shoot and a hole is worked out in real time. You can then use that as a sniper hole and get the jump on an enemy. The same system works online in competitive multiplayer as well. You can see bullet holes ripping up bits of wood and shredding the cover in front of you. It adds a lot to the destruction to the game world we have created. ●



Publisher: Eidos

Developer: Pivotal Games

Heritage: Conflict: Desert Storm, Conflict: Vietnam

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◀ CONTROL ▶



Big in 2008

The first few months of this year have been relatively quiet for the 360, after a breathless fourth quarter of 2007, with classic after classic spilling forth onto your favourite console. Well, after the calm comes the storm - with these ten games due out this year, the 360 is about to explode spectacularly back into life. Here we unveil the hottest ten games of the year, and explain why each and every one is going to be massive...

10

TOO HUMAN Microsoft / Silicon Knights / ETA: Summer

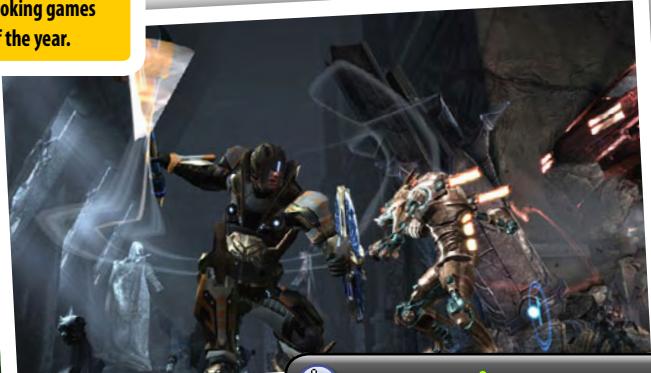
What's it about?

It's Norse mythology set in a cybernetic age. It's God of War-style scrapping meets Diablo-esque role-playing. It's been in development for nearly nine years, starting out as a PlayStation game. And it's got online co-operative play and a tiered levelling system.

Why is it a big deal?

It's been the subject of a potentially costly legal argument between developers Silicon Knights

The game's art design is exceptional - however it plays, it's certainly one of the best-looking games of the year.



360 EXCLUSIVE

and Epic Games, makers of the Unreal Engine which the game runs on. It's been the target for much internet derision, which was then immediately silenced when the game was shown at last month's GDC.

All that said, Too Human represents one of the most ambitious undertakings ever seen on a console; its story, set to span three games (a deal has been signed for MS to produce a trilogy) is intriguingly adult and hugely elaborate. An impressive recent demo, and Silicon Knights' reputation as expert storytellers suggests this could be the biggest resurrection since Lazarus.

ANTICIPATION RATING

Could go either way, but after its impressive GDC showing, we're cautiously optimistic.



9

ALAN WAKE

Microsoft / Remedy Entertainment / ETA: Q4

360 EXCLUSIVE

What's it about?

Currently being developed by Max Payne creators Remedy Entertainment, Alan Wake is a psychological thriller with survival-horror elements that looks to raise the bar for story and cinematic presentation in videogames. The plot sounds a bit Silent Hill - mystery writer escapes to small town after the unexplained disappearance of his fiancée - but this sounds a little more subtle and intriguing than your standard horror game. For starters, light plays a very important part - the game's enemies gain strength from darkness, and as the game progresses days get shorter. So you need to use your wits to make the best use of the daylight hours, and try to produce as much light as possible during the night to give yourself a fighting chance against your foes.

Why is it a big deal?

Max Payne proved Remedy could spin a gripping yarn, and Alan Wake looks to be painted with the same brush, but with subtler shades this time around. There's more than a hint of Stephen King about the footage we've seen so far, and the town of Bright Falls is a stunning open world environment that feels like a living, breathing place. It absolutely drips with atmosphere, and everything just looks wonderfully polished.

ANTICIPATION RATING

It'd be higher, but it's not 100% certain that Alan Wake will arrive this year. Though we'd put money on MS applying some pressure for a pre-Christmas release.

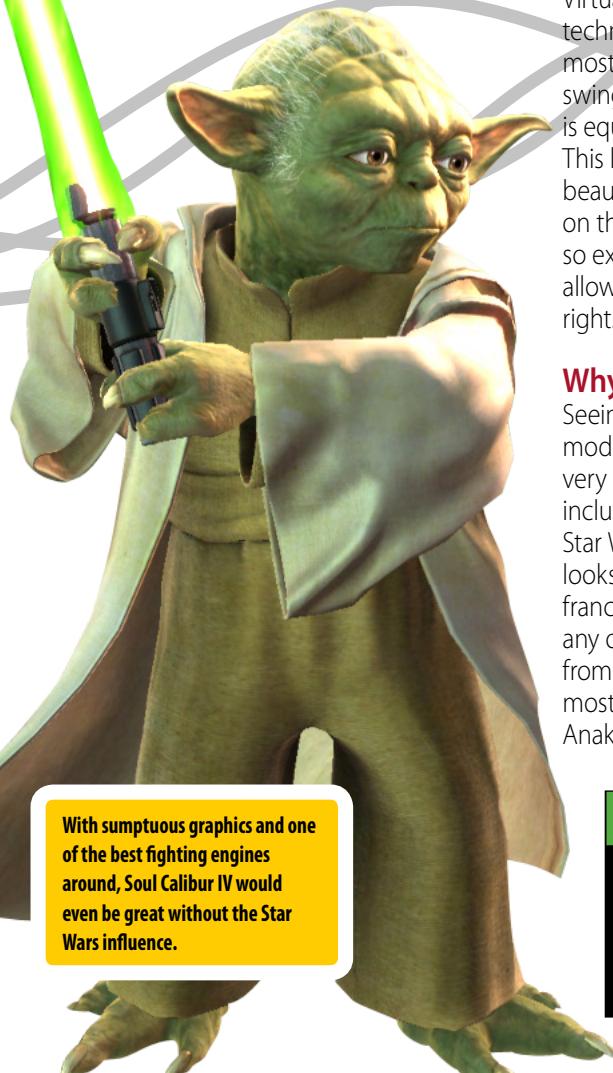


Alan Wake promises a level of immersion and quality of storytelling that few other games can match.



SOUL CALIBUR IV

Ubisoft / Project Soul / ETA: Summer

BEST ON 360

With sumptuous graphics and one of the best fighting engines around, Soul Calibur IV would even be great without the Star Wars influence.

What's it about?

Virtua Fighter might have the edge when it comes to technical fighting, but the Soul Calibur series is perhaps the most purely enjoyable 3D fighting series. Its sword-swinging action might have purists sniffing, but its combat is equally balletic, and it's always been a visual powerhouse. This latest version has given an HD makeover to an already beautiful face, and it's easily one of the best-looking games on the console. Stages will be more interactive than before, so expect plenty of destructible scenery, and arenas that allow you to move up and down instead of just left and right.

Why is it a big deal?

Seeing some of gaming's most spectacular character models rendered in pin-sharp detail is something to be very excited about, but the biggest deal of all is the inclusion of the veteran Jedi Knight himself, Yoda. Yes, the Star Wars favourite will be a playable character, and he looks to be one of the most interesting additions to the franchise ever, with a totally different feel and moveset to any other character. PS3 owners might get Darth Vader, but from everything we've seen so far, Yoda is comfortably the most interesting and unique fighter. And he could kick Anakin's arse any day.

ANTICIPATION RATING

There might be better games this year, but few will bring such joy to beat-em-up fans. And it's got Yoda, for crying out loud.



PROTOTYPE

Sierra / Radical Entertainment / ETA: Summer

What's it about?

Assassin's Creed with added crash bang wallop, basically. You play as Alex Mercer, a genetically mutated, shape-shifting man-creature - searching for the truth behind his identity as he runs, leaps and smashes his way through New York. While you're able to move more stealthily around the city and blend into your environment, it's clear that creating absolute havoc is going to be much more fun.

Why is it a big deal?

When Prototype was recently demonstrated to an enraptured audience at GDC, the closing footage had hardened journalists applauding wildly at the amazing scenes unfolding in front of them. Essentially, this looks like the videogame version of the best action movie you've ever seen. Mercer can make prodigious leaps onto passing helicopters and commandeer them; he can run across any surface, including walls; he can hurl tanks at his assailants; and he can take the form and powers of anyone within reach. Whether the game can have a satisfying story and structure remains to be seen, but with Hollywood vocal talent like Barry Pepper (Saving Private Ryan) and Gordon Clapp (NYPD Blue) on board, Radical Entertainment is aiming high.

ANTICIPATION RATING

We'll wait until we see more before getting too excited. But this is one hell of a dark horse, and could well be in the critics' Best of 2008 lists come December.





LEFT 4 DEAD

EA / Turtle Rock / ETA: Q3

360 EXCLUSIVE

What's it about?

The Orange Box plus Zombies = Instant Excitement. Yes, the insanely brilliant Valve - the folks behind Portal and Half-Life 2 - have entered the survival-horror genre with a game that almost sounds too good to be true. Left 4 Dead is basically a first-person, multiplayer Resident Evil - and if that doesn't get your pulse racing, nothing will. It's a blisteringly-paced thrill-ride of a game, where communication between you and your team-mates is essential for survival. And though it's also available on PC, PS3 owners won't be getting this game - it's a console exclusive for Microsoft's baby.

Why is it a big deal?

It's Valve. The company might not be prolific in terms of quantity, but every single game it releases is polished to the nth degree. Left 4 Dead has actually slipped a couple of times - originally it was due for a release late last year - but that's not the sign of any developmental problems, that's merely Valve wanting the game to match up to its usual impeccable standards. This is frantic, edgy and absolutely terrifying stuff - screaming to a team-mate as you witness a horde of flesh-eaters approaching their location is the stuff of nightmares, even more so when you're the one they're targeting. The weak of stomach need not apply, but for anyone looking for a slice of adult horror action, Left 4 Dead will almost certainly satisfy your thirst. We can't wait.



We've yet to play a bad game by Valve, and it doesn't look like Left 4 Dead is about to change that fact.

ANTICIPATION RATING

We just want a concrete release date now so we can start counting down the days.



FABLE 2

360 EXCLUSIVE
Microsoft / Lionhead / ETA: Winter

What's it about?

With Mass Effect having slaked our thirst for a decent post-Oblivion Western RPG, the focus now turns to Lionhead's Fable 2, the sequel to an Xbox original that garnered decent critical and commercial success, but not quite the acclaim that creator Peter Molyneux had clearly hoped for. Fable reached further than it could grasp (though it was still a terrific game), but it looks like the sequel could live up to the potential shown by the original. Of biggest interest is the game's new jump-in, jump-out co-operative mode, which has the potential to revolutionise the genre.

Why is it a big deal?

That co-operative mode is more than just a gimmick, it's a hugely significant addition. The RPG has

traditionally been a predominantly single-player experience - to be able to invite a friend into your own lovingly-created world is not only revelatory, it has enormous repercussions. Molyneux wants players to emotionally invest in their own world, and with other players having the potential to create - and more importantly, destroy - within another universe, this could lead to devastating consequences. Besides that, Fable 2 looks to provide a meatier, lengthier, more detailed solo game, and with the game's mix of busy townships and idyllic rural hamlets proving a feast for the eye, this is an outside bet for 360 game of the year.

ANTICIPATION RATING

Lush environments + two-player sword-swinging combat = potential classic.



The craftsmanship that's gone into the game's environments is clear to see. The lighting in particular is glorious.


360 EXCLUSIVE

NINJA GAIDEN 2

Microsoft / Team Ninja / ETA: June

What's it about?

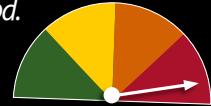
It's the sequel to Xbox's hardest game, a title so punishing some people famously couldn't get past Level One (hello FHM's one-star review). If you had the patience though, few games could match the sheer joy of lead ninja Ryu Hayabusa's athleticism. Pirouetting between baddies, leaping from walls to deal balletic death via his fists or swords looks spectacular in the right hands - and the Izuna Drop move, as Ryu piledrives his foes into the ground - is a sight to behold. Gaiden might be unforgiving, but it was always intended as a treat for more hardcore players. This may well be a touch easier than before, and that's not the only significant change...

Why is it a big deal?

It's possibly the most gleefully gory game we've ever seen. Its head-lopping action brings forth rivers of blood that will probably only pass the censor's scissors thanks to its absurdly fantastical nature. Creator Tomonobu Itagaki has claimed the game will have a thirty-hour story mode, as well as several improvements to the weapon set, and a save system that allows energy to be replenished - a welcome addition for those not blessed with the nimblest of thumbs.

ANTICIPATION RATING

Incredibly beautiful, incredibly violent - and probably incredibly good. June can't come soon enough.



HALO WARS

Microsoft / Ensemble / ETA: Winter

360 EXCLUSIVE

What's it about?

The world's biggest game gets the real-time strategy treatment. While Halo Wars isn't as big a deal as its inspiration, it's going to be fascinating to take command of all the vehicles and troops from the original series. It features an innovative, console-friendly control scheme which sees you selecting units using taps and holds of the A button, and is currently being developed by Ensemble Studios, with assistance from Halo creators Bungie. Microsoft is certainly confident that the game will be a success - it's already announced that a demo prior to its release will enable you to "play before you buy".

Why is it a big deal?

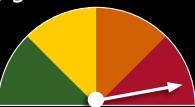
Because it's Halo. The game's universe clearly lends itself well to the RTS genre, but many Halo players will be more interested in the story aspects of the game. It's set before the events of the first Halo game, so expect some story gaps to be filled in, while Ensemble has hinted that you may be able to play as the Covenant. With Bungie on board, the game should be a faithful adaptation of the various Halo worlds, while it's already looking pretty stellar for a strategy game. The control scheme had already been in development for six months before Ensemble went to Bungie with the idea, and with Microsoft producing,

the all-round presentation should be excellent.



ANTICIPATION RATING

Likely to be more action-packed than your usual strategy games, this could be a crossover hit as well as a critical smash.





Previews

**GRAND THEFT AUTO IV**

Rockstar / Rockstar North / ETA: April 29th

BEST ON 360**What's it about?**

The other biggest game in the world finally arrives on 360 after a delay that many commentators put down to Rockstar's struggle to get the game working successfully on PS3. Regardless of the end result, it's almost certain that GTA IV will be best on 360 - not only have all demonstrations so far been running on MS hardware, but the 360 will play exclusive host to several downloadable 'episodes'. The tentatively-titled GTA IV: Episode One will be available in August, just four months after the full game hits the shelves.

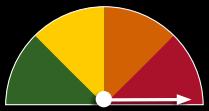
Why is it a big deal?

It's the biggest, most popular, most recognised brand in gaming. While it's unlikely to have the seismic impact of GTA III's shift to 3D, IV is already looking like an instant classic. It's refinement over revolution, with the game's

basics being improved beyond all recognition, while a more pared-down approach gives it a grittier, more realistic feel. With current-generation muscle powering what looks to be one of the most immersive open world environments ever seen, this will almost certainly be the biggest-selling game of the year, as well as one of the most acclaimed. Perhaps most excitingly, of all the games on this list, this one is here the soonest. Less than two months to go...

ANTICIPATION RATING

We couldn't want this any more if it came with a free Jessica Alba.

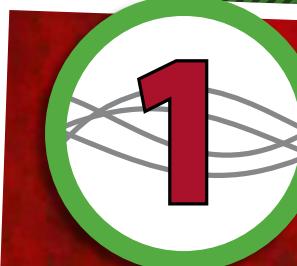


Liberty City is looking incredible - GTA IV could make all other sandbox games redundant.

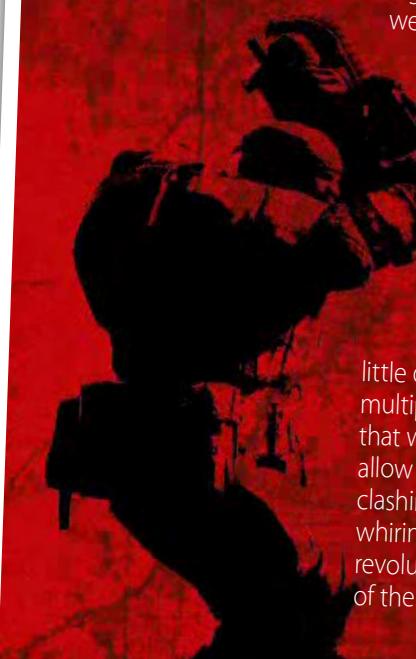
No in-game shots so far, though the technical demos at GDC suggest it will look even better than the already-stunning original.

360 EXCLUSIVE**GEARS OF WAR 2**

Microsoft / Epic Games / ETA: November

**What's it about?**

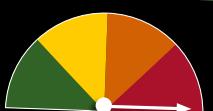
It's the follow-up to what was, until Halo 3, the 360's biggest game. And for good reason, too - Gears was a balls-to-the-wall, frenetic, heart-thumpingly brilliant third-person shooter with more excitement than a dozen Hollywood blockbusters. Its campaign may have been a little short, but in co-operative mode, there are few games on the console that can touch it. And, up until very recently, its Live component was the most successful multiplayer on 360 by a long, long way. With Marcus Fenix and friends making a welcome return, this should be bigger and better than an already excellent original. Be excited, be very excited.

Why is it a big deal?

The new Unreal Engine technology propelling the game is quite incredible, allowing for more environmental destruction, more organic enemies, some astounding water effects, and a boatload of extra onscreen foes. Besides the technical improvements, Gears should have a more substantial story - the trailer suggests something a little darker, and more emotionally affecting - and its multiplayer will be further tweaked. One further tidbit of info that was revealed very recently is that the game will now allow chainsaw battles - the stylised teaser showed Fenix clashing with a Locust before removing his innards with his whirling Lancer blades. Again, it's more evolution than revolution, but we'll happily take an improved version of one of the 360's premier titles, thanks very much.

ANTICIPATION RATING

About the closest you can get to a sure thing. This will be huge AND amazing. And you've only 'til November to wait.



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Publisher: Microsoft Game Studios

Developer: Mistwalker

Heritage: Final Fantasy, Blue Dragon

Link: <http://www.xbox.com/en-US/games/splash/I/lostodyssey/>
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Lost Odyssey

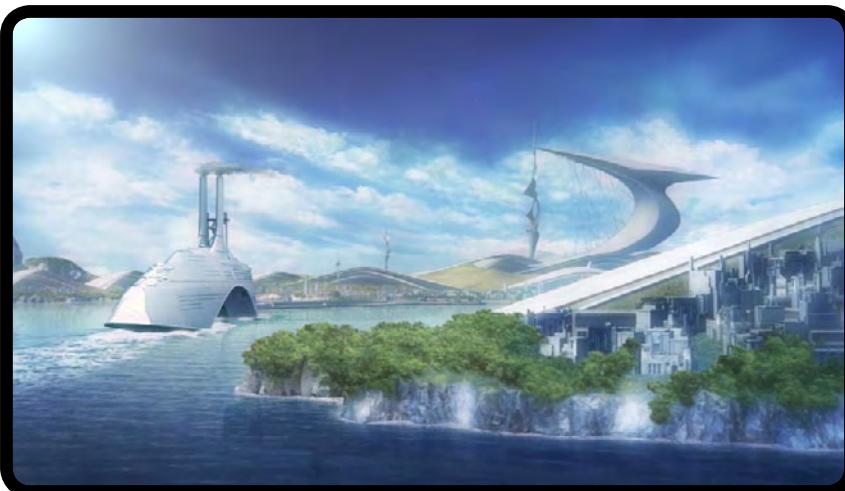
A matter of life and death...

When was the last time a game made you cry? It's not often this wonderful medium of ours can reduce us to salty man-tears, which is perhaps why *Lost Odyssey* feels so special. Aside from being a bit on the emotional side, it's also a cracking RPG - as long as you're prepared to put up with some of its old-school foibles.

It starts with a huge, stunning battle taking place between hundreds of troops and robots, which is where immortal Kaim Argonar comes in, single-handedly taking out swathes of soldiers and huge mechs with just a few swift slashes of his enormous

sword. It's a Japanese role-player, so naturally he's lost his memory - while a significant portion of the story focuses on Kaim finding out the cause of his acute amnesia, there's plenty of double-dealing, political intrigue, and baddies with ridiculous eyebrows to boo and hiss at.

In truth, after such a startling opening, it takes an age for the plot to get moving, with lengthy cutscenes interrupting the game's flow, and characters being introduced left, right and centre. And once you're over that small hump, you've got a couple of hours of tutorials to look forward to, and that hoary old J-RPG 'favourite' -



the random battle. Though in reality, it's not as bad as that sounds - it's essential to learn the ins and outs of the combat to really get to grips with the tactical nature of battling and arranging your party effectively, while the encounters are far less frequent than you might think. You'll certainly be able to take more than four or five steps before coming up against a horde of the game's beautifully-designed beasties that's for sure - and there's the inclusion of a sprint



Ming is the queen of Numara, a nation in turmoil. Her English accent seems a little shaky, but like most of your team, she's a very likeable character.

LEADER OF THE PACK

What makes Lost Odyssey the best traditional RPG on 360?



Fight!

Laugh!

Cry!

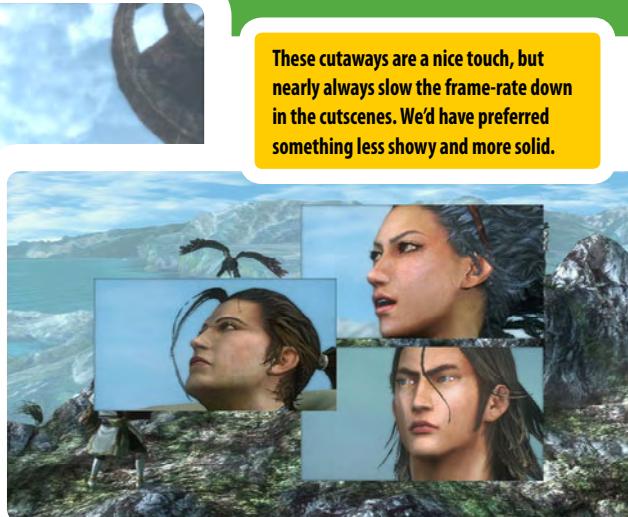
Fight!

When rings are equipped you're able to add a bit of oomph to your attacks - a large outer ring descends upon a smaller one encircling your enemy. Release the trigger at the right time and you'll pull off a 'perfect' attack, knocking off a few more HP.

"A game that dares engage its player on an unrivalled emotional level"



Boss battles ramp up the difficulty significantly from the fights that have gone before.



These cutaways are a nice touch, but nearly always slow the frame-rate down in the cutscenes. We'd have preferred something less showy and more solid.



Roll over screen for annotations

> Lost Odyssey continued

button to bypass areas you may already have visited (or just want to get through in double-quick time).

The turn-based fights themselves are varied and entertaining, relying on strategy over brute force - you'll rarely be able to overpower your opponents by grinding to raise your party's level, because after a few scraps in each dungeon, the necessary experience is harder to come by. There's a real-time twist added to the melee attacks, with a timed targeting system activated by holding the R button and releasing at

the right moment to increase the power of your blows, though you'll soon find that a combination of offensive spells and more concentrated attacks work best.

Your party does require a fair amount of TLC - immortals need to learn skills from their mortal compatriots, while all characters can learn new abilities from their equipment - once a skill is assigned, you need to make sure you equip a new item to make the most of its powers. Swapping members of your

party out is important, as is taking your time to hunt down the most well-hidden chests where the best new items invariably are. It's a game that's happy to take its own sweet time, and patient players will likely get the most out of it.

Lost Odyssey doesn't do an awful lot new, but everything is incredibly polished and balanced. The Unreal Engine-powered graphics are stunning at times, with some gorgeous, detailed locations and large, well-animated characters. The plot might occasionally

veer towards the schmaltzy or the hackneyed, but often sidesteps genre pitfalls with thoughtful dialogue or touches of wit, the latter frequently coming from team joker Jansen. Voice acting is decent, while Nobuo Uematsu's score is exceptional. And Kaim's memories are realised in the form of text-based dream sequences that might sound unremarkable on paper but are

>

"The Unreal Engine-powered graphics are stunning"

FREEZE FRAME

Lost in time...



5 MINUTES

This is how you start a game! Kaim's immortality makes him the ultimate badass in battle.



2 HOURS

Still waiting for the plot and action to kick in - introductions aplenty but not much else.



9 HOURS

End of Disc One - expect a couple of truly heart-rending scenes.



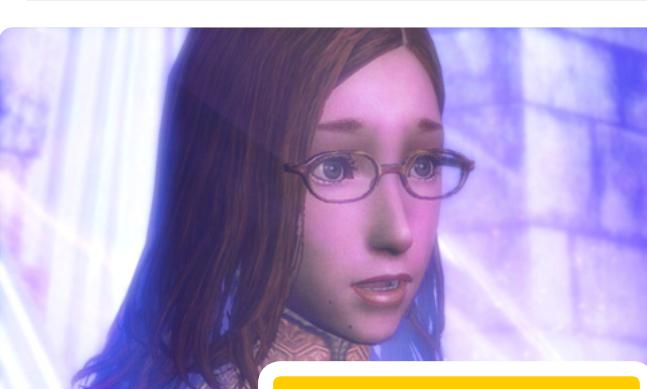
21 HOURS

Disc Three picks up the pace after a couple of lacklustre dungeons. Sed is worth the wait.



40 HOURS

Nearing the end, but there are several secret areas and bosses to discover...

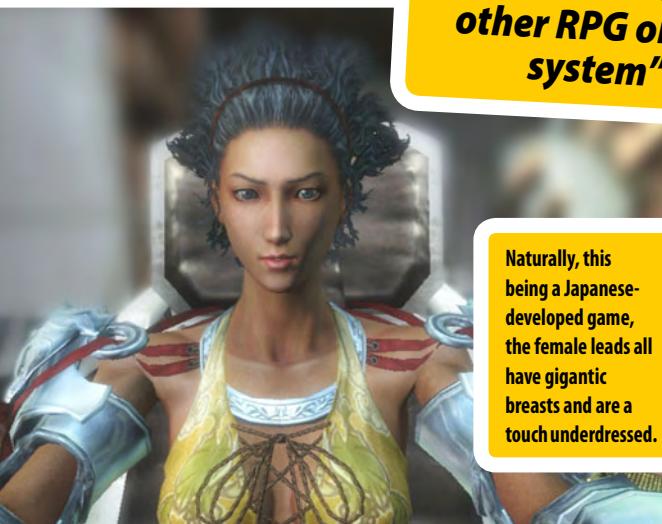


Sarah is another party member who has a connection to Kaim we're not about to reveal here. Suffice to say, some of the plot twists and turns will keep you on your toes.

Enemy creatures come in all shapes and sizes, though every single one has a weakness or two to exploit. It's finding it that's the key to coming out of a fight with all your party members in one piece.



"An epic experience that dwarfs every other RPG on the system"



Naturally, this being a Japanese-developed game, the female leads all have gigantic breasts and are a touch underdressed.



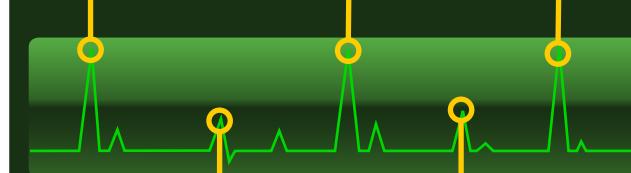
Young king Tolten is initially used as a puppet by the game's main villain, but he soon develops into an interesting character.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

Astounding opening battle

Tears and fears

Fantastic final stretch and climax



player on an unrivalled emotional level, it deserves to find an audience. Fingers crossed that it will be big enough for developer Mistwalker to create something even better next time. ●

Simon Watson

> Lost Odyssey continued

actually transcendently beautiful, weaving narratives around serious themes with a skill that few other videogames can match.

The game's problems are tiny flaws on an otherwise rich tapestry - loading times aren't excessive, but they do slow the game down, while the frame-rate can judder at times, and the story's occasional mis-steps jar more simply because the rest of it is so good. Lost Odyssey isn't a perfect game, nor is it for everyone - more action-based Western role-players will have turned some gamers off to this more cerebral approach. But it's an epic experience that, at its best, dwarfs every other RPG on the system. If you're intrigued enough to give Lost Odyssey a go, then your curiosity will likely be richly rewarded - and if you're anything like us, you might just fall for it like a ton of bricks. As a game that dares to celebrate its roots and to engage its

360Zine Verdict

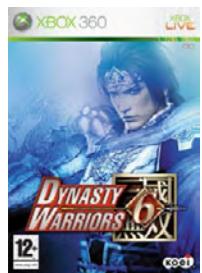
An epic tale of love and loss - and a cracking RPG in its own right

Brilliant narrative

Superb turn-based scrapping

Some annoying technical issues

89%



Dynasty Warriors 6

Kingdoms of heaven

The Dynasty Warriors series remains one of gaming's most cruelly misunderstood franchises. Ask the vast majority of gamers - and critics - and they'll tell you it's an inexplicably popular, puddle-deep hack and slash. And while playing it for an hour on Easy might give you that impression, that's some way from being true. If you do play it as a straightforward button-mash slicefest, you might get through a stage or two, but that's as far as you'll progress. Later

levels - even on the lowest difficulty setting - will see that approach leading to the Game Over screen, and on Normal or Hard, your arse will be handed to you before you've even reached 50 kills.

Dynasty Warriors 6 doesn't stray from the regular template one iota - and why should it? It's a system-selling title in Japan, and there's really nothing wrong with its - some would say stubborn - insistence on sticking to tradition. Admittedly, it's a steep

learning curve for newcomers - you're effectively thrown in at the deep end with no tutorial to show you the ropes. Yet its objectives are simple - mostly, you'll just need to rout the enemy, and turn the red tide of your foes to the blue of your own forces. You have several generals on your side, whose morale is affected by your own performance in combat - it's always best to lead by example, and pay attention to any cries for help. The flow of battle is in constant flux - enemy generals will suddenly attack a poorly-defended base while you're leading a

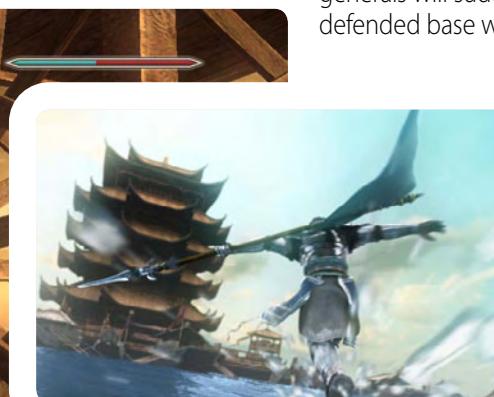


Cutscenes are beautifully presented, but suffer slightly from terrible, stilted voice acting. Again, though, that's part of the DW tradition.

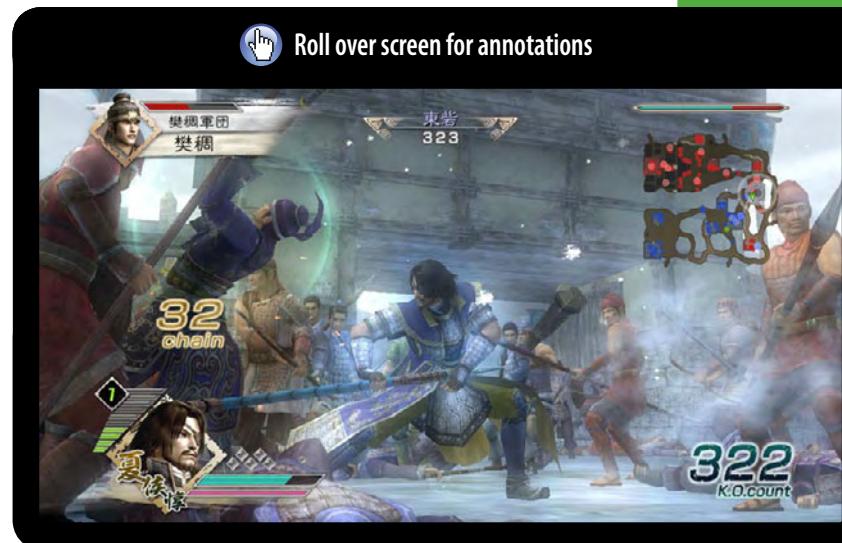
charge on the opposite side of the map, and occasionally neutral forces arrive on the scene, who can often join forces with your foes. Decision-making has to be done in an instant - do you abandon your current task to assist one of your most helpful allies, or leave them to their fate while you attempt to achieve your objective? It's a game that demands intense concentration throughout.

The changes to the formula are all tiny, but effective design choices - swimming can sometimes get you to your objective quicker, while bashing

It might not sound like much, but the addition of ladders is a significant one to the series. They can be useful for a hasty retreat, as well as improving the sense of scale.



Our favourite cutscene moment comes early on - the evil Lu Bu manages to split flood waters in half by spinning his sword swiftly to slice through the wave. Superb.



Roll over screen for annotations



FREEZE FRAME

Dyanstic time



10 MINUTES

Starting out on Musou mode - you've a long journey ahead.



3 HOURS

Abandoning your gung-ho approach for more thoughtful tactics after a battering.



6 HOURS

Teaming up with a friend for some co-operative action. Swapping strategies is great fun.



8 HOURS

Story mode is done and dusted - time to move onto the game's Challenge modes.



30 HOURS

Still so much to do - and by now your favourite characters will be near-unbeatable.



The graphics are sometimes beautiful, though pop-up is quite frequent. It's forgivable though, given the number of onscreen soldiers and the fast pace.



> DW 6 continued

down gates allows you easy entry to enemy strongholds. It's quite something to start clobbering a huge wooden structure, before an army of hundreds joins you to finish the job. Indeed, it's all quite a spectacle, with fights against generals blurring out the surrounding action as you clash weapons, and more characters onscreen than ever before. There's a new combo system that allows you to

build up your Renbu meter with repeated unanswered blows - once full, you can pull off several special attacks and chain moves together with a glorious fluency that shows off the brilliant motion-captured animation.

With an incredible roster of characters, a fantastic co-operative mode and a host of other game types to try, it's pretty much the complete package if you're a fan of the series. If you're not, then this is the perfect entry point. And if you do take a chance and fall for it, then *Dynasty Warriors 6* will keep you going for a long, long time to come. ●

Chris Schilling

Each fighter requires a very different approach - Zhou Yu's staff has a long reach, but he's not the strongest.



Though it's unlikely many will buy *Dynasty Warriors 6* for the story, there's a wealth of fascinating information about the real-life wars it's inspired by.

360Zine Verdict

The best Warriors yet

- ➔ Awe-inspiring battlefield chaos
- ➔ Will take you months to 100%
- ➔ Still not everyone's cup of tea

83%



Publisher: EA Big
Developer: EA Canada
Heritage: FIFA Street series
Link: www.fifastreet3.com
OUT NOW

FIFA Street 3

The weirdest hat-trick in football is complete

Football is not basketball, so why on earth have EA used the NBA Street Homecourt engine as the basis for this FIFA footy spin-off?

Afterall, football makes for good videogames, especially in the guise of the slavishly

authentic FIFA Football and Pro Evolution Soccer. So why turn it into an approximation of something you play with your giant hands?

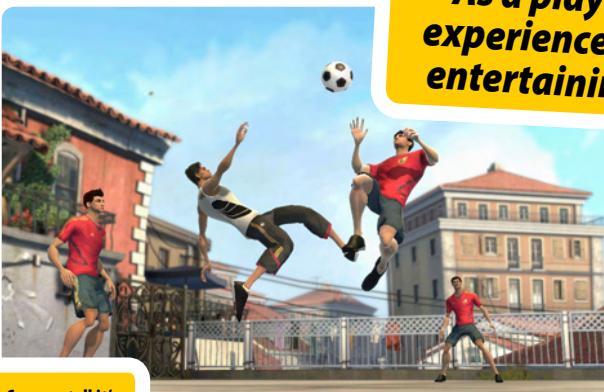
Well, apart from dropping a few extra quid out of the pricey FIFA license, and offering up a different take in a fairly samey market, FIFA Street is really for people who hate the beautiful game.

Street cuts out all the 'boring' stuff, such as solid defending, tactics and flowing passing play in favour of glamorous individual flair and infeasible trickery.

This is a game inspired by football, but more akin to free-running or salsa dancing with players that twitch and heave as they skip around the pitch.

It's fake, it's ludicrous and yet it still

"As a playing experience it's entertaining"



Can you tell it's based on a basketball game engine?

FREEZE FRAME

A game of two halves



2MINS

I chose to play as the Stocky team - now I understand the name. This is not your average footy game...



6MINS

Second game, and I'm still lashing in shots. It suddenly dawns how important build-up play is after a humbling defeat.



Capello's tough dietary regime has hit Peter Crouch hard.



A shot - they do happen in FIFA Street sometimes.

TRICKY TREAT

How to unlock your soccer super powers...



Ready

Aim

Fire

Ready

Perform a bit of trickery using your right thumbstick for drags and feints and the Y button for keepy-ups. As well as making your opponents look like fools you'll top up a yellow power bar...

experience it's entertaining, instantly gratifying and ultimately likeable. But nothing more.

You see, in FIFA Street 3, scoring a thirty-yard belter is not only par for the course, it's almost missing the point.

As ever this small-sided football



1HR32MINS

First game against Brazil - the masterclass that follows is a reminder of how many tricks are in the FIFA Street playbook.



3HRS21MINS

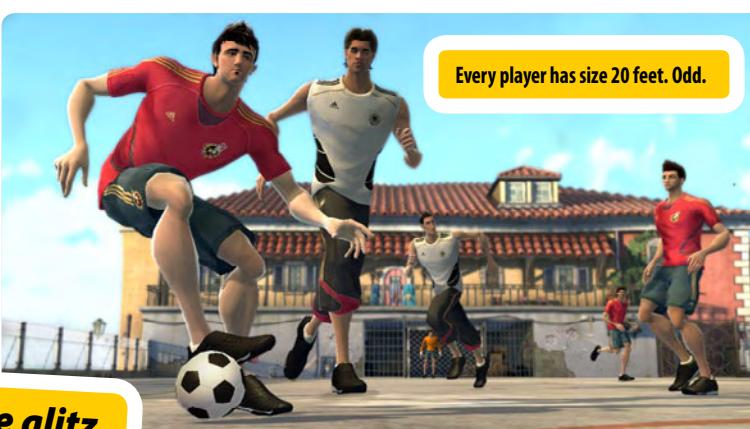
Oh god, I'm good now. A spectacular overhead volley from range typifies the top class goals you can't help scoring with a bit of practice.



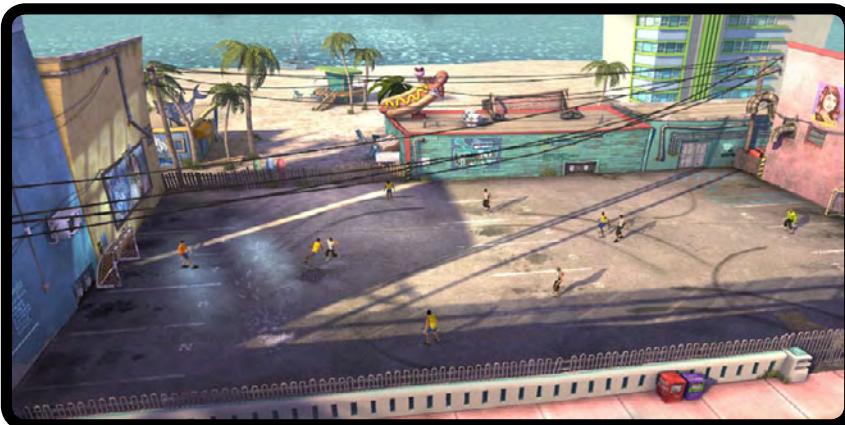
Reviews



The inevitable Tokyo level is dripping with neon.



Every player has size 20 feet. Odd.



"Underneath the glitz the game does boast some depth"

> Fifa Street continued

fantasy encourages you to juggle the ball, roll it under your boot and turn back to do it again before you even think about passing.

Doing so will build up Gamebreaker power that is only banked when you have a dig at goal, which stops your mate overindulging his passion for poncing about on his own goal line by

giving him an impetus to attack.

Once you've filled your power bar and hit the right shoulder button you'll unleash Gamebreaker mode and find all your specialist stars are experts in every skill, making scoring a darn sight easier.

Thankfully this feature is rebalanced from the previous FIFA Street, in which 'Gamebreaker' was an apt name for a mode which grossly unbalanced the

play. Now the most ludicrous power shots are stoppable, at least, and it's perfectly possible to intercept the ball and run down the clock as your opponents' power fades.

Greater balance has also been achieved in a literal sense with upgraded trick mechanics which allow you to perform some heroic keepy-ups while defenders - who remain too blunted by their inability to pole-axe you - look on helplessly.

Underneath the glitz of majestic trickery, the game does boast some depth. The developers have been attentive to details such as pitch sounds, have shoved in a smattering of interactive scenery elements and piled up a raft of gameplay challenges.

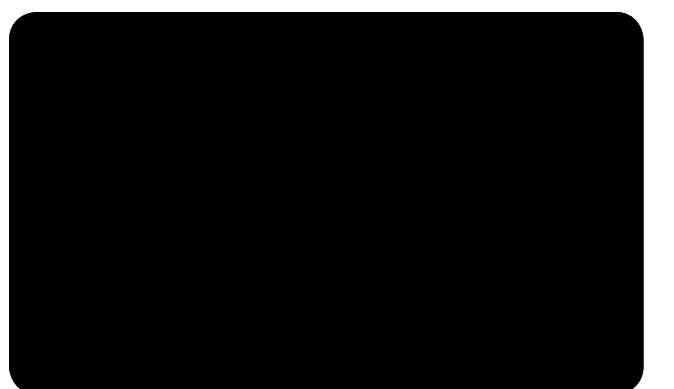
Sadly, all the modes are really variations on a fairly static theme and ultimately repetitive gameplay. Once you've seen 100 daft tricks, it feels like you've seen them all. And when screaming volleys from inside your own half become mundane, so the appeal of FIFA Street 3 begins to slowly fade.

Lee Hall

Huth and Ballack eye Kaka's mullet enviously.



Gerrard's team-mates huff as he steals the limelight.

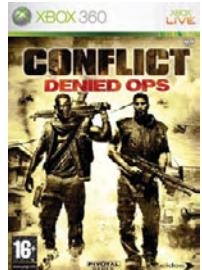


360Zine Verdict

A soccer circus that's just for laughs

- Basketcase tricks
- Instantly gratifying
- Ultimately samey

60%



Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Pivotal Games
Heritage: Conflict: Desert Storm, Conflict: Vietnam
Link: www.conflictdeniedops.com
OUT NOW

Conflict: Denied Ops

Two angry men, one volatile situation - something's gonna get blown up...

It's a formula we've seen before, as recently as in Eidos' other angry-men shooter, *Kane and Lynch*. Two ne'er-do-wells, drawn together out of necessity rather than fondness for each other are placed into a variety of situations, where they can swear

profusely, kill a few bad guys, and, most importantly, blow stuff up.

With this in mind, it'd be fair to say that *Conflict: Denied Ops* is a hefty departure from the series' heritage, although it's certainly not a bad one. Moving away from a squad based

action game, which relied as much on tactics as it did on a quick trigger finger, *Conflict: Denied Ops* is a much more down to earth shooter, with an emphasis on co-operative teamwork, between Lang and Graves, two rugged, tough guy soldiers who are the US Government's first call when they need to send a "deniable" operative into any hostile situation.

As we mentioned earlier, *Denied Ops* is quite a departure from your normal *Conflict* game, as rather than being a squad based shooter, it has been designed for co-op. In single player, this means you'll be ordering an AI partner around, using a nicely intuitive context-sensitive command



As you jet-set around the world, you'll visit some varied locales, each of which looks as gorgeous as the other.

"Destructibility is one of the most impressive parts of the game"

FREEZE FRAME

Time on your hands



5 MINS

The first mission serves mostly as a tutorial, and introduction to the characters.



45 MINS

From driving vehicles, to huge set pieces, the levels are huge, taking around 40 mins to complete.



50 MINS

After finishing the first mission, you get to choose from a variety of locations around the world.



1HR 30 MINS

Delving into the split-screen co-op, you quickly realize this is much more fun than the single player...

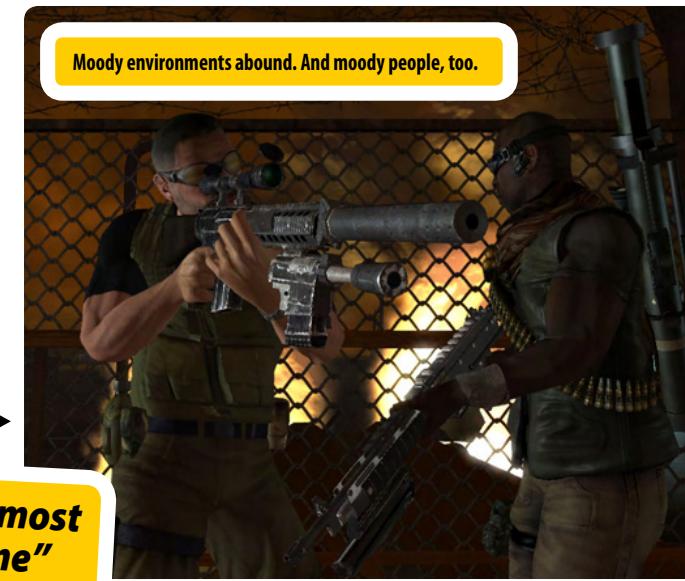


2 HRS

Especially as now, you can make your buddy do everything for you! Hack faster!



Graves is the sniper, Lang's the in your face shooter. Together, they're a force to be reckoned with.



Moody environments abound. And moody people, too.



> Denied Ops continued

system, which lets you simply use one button for each order. However, this system can be a bit off-putting at first, thanks to the fact the developers have chosen to put it on the left-trigger - which is usually associated with grenades, or zooming in.

Unfortunately, the game also suffers from the odd AI problem, with your buddy occasionally just standing in the middle of a room getting shot at, without thinking to move for cover, but for the most part, Denied Ops' single player is an enjoyable, if not perfect romp through a variety of destructible environments.

And it's this destructibility that's one

It's a shame the AI isn't up to much, else this would have been a fantastic shooter.



"The game really shines in co-op mode"

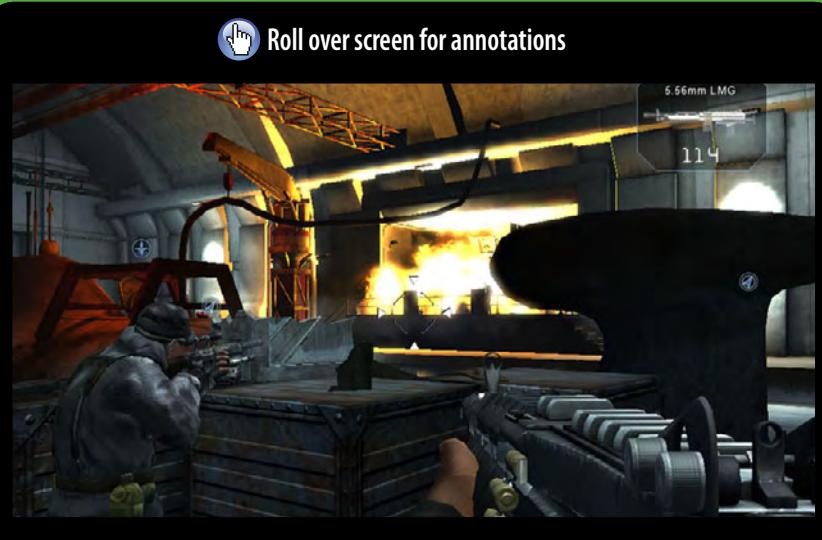
of the most impressive parts of the game. Running through a level, shooting at everything with the highest powered weapon you've got just to see it crumble before your eyes is an empowering thing; when it actually adds an extra layer of strategic depth, as it does here, it's even better.

See an enemy hiding behind a wall? Simply blow the wall away, and take him out, rather than just shooting through it without leaving a mark, COD4 style.

Where the game really shines, however, is in its co-op mode. Letting you and a friend play through the whole game together in split-screen, or online, the co-op mode not only eliminates all of the AI problems we'd mentioned earlier - it actually makes the whole game a hell of a lot more fun. Driving vehicles, and blowing stuff up with a mate in tow is a cool experience, and as a co-op FPS, this is probably second only to Halo.

An enjoyable FPS, Conflict: Denied Ops certainly isn't without its flaws, but thanks to the sheer fun found in its co-op mode, and destructible environments, we can overlook them. A decent enough shooter, and well worth a look. ●

Ian Morris



Roll over screen for annotations



360Zine Verdict

Co-op fun with added blow-up-ability

- Great co-op
- Solid shooter
- Frustrating AI

74
%

Xbox Live Arcade Round-Up...

Trance, Ninjas, Poker and War make for an interesting month on the XBLA



Poker Smash

Developer: Void Star Creations, LLC Publisher: Microsoft Games Studios Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

At its heart, Poker Smash is a simple match-three game. Taking place over a variety of themed boards, it's up to you to simply shuffle cards horizontally, and create matching pairs running up, or across the board. Where it gets interesting, however, is when you take into account the fact you can match poker hands too. Getting a full house, or a straight flush will net you big points,

and racking up screen clearing combos is as satisfying as ever. Basic poker knowledge will get you far, but the novice shouldn't have much trouble either.

- Good puzzler
- Loads of modes
- Poker adds depth

All out

84%

RezHD

Developer: Q Entertainment Publisher: Microsoft Games Studios Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

It's been a long time coming this one, but it was well worth the wait. The overlooked Dreamcast classic, Rez, is hard to describe. It's part rhythm action game, part third person on-the-rails shooter, and part psychedelic trance vision. Guiding your bloke through the various levels, you simply hold the A button, and highlight up to eight enemies, before releasing the button to shoot. When you hit the enemies, it'll make a beat - so kind of like Lumines, the better you do, the cooler the music you'll make, and the better experience you'll have.



- Much cheaper than the original
- HD and 5.1 is the ultimate chill-out
- Too hardcore for some

Stoned

88%



Commanders: Attack of the Genos

Developer: SouthEnd Interactive Publisher: Sierra Online Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

Letting you take control of an army in an alternate past, Commanders has you fighting the good fight across fifteen missions through either the game's story driven campaign, or in local or online multiplay, against up to three friends. The action is pretty standard turn-based fair, with you trying to outmanoeuvre enemy units, keeping them in range and your soldiers safe, but sadly, this is lacking a lot of the charm of Band of Bugs.

N+

Developer: Slick Entertainment Inc. Publisher: Metanet Software Inc. Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

Although it's free on the PC, we really can't complain with the hand we've been dealt here. With over 300 exclusive levels, a level editor, AND a co-op mode, N+ really is a complete package. Letting you and up to three friends play through the game's various platforming challenges, N+ casts you as that coolest of gaming characters, a ninja, as you hop, jump, and generally rely on physics and gravity to be as forgiving to you as possible, as you attempt to make the pixel perfect jumps required to get from one end of the level to the other.



- Good turn based action
- Commander units are cool
- Story and presentation weak

Solid, if unspectacular

80%

- 4 player co-op
- Great value for money
- Gameplay keeps you coming back

Gravity, bombs, Ninjas,

89%



Next Month

In 360Zine Issue 17

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW & INTERVIEW

ALONE IN THE DARK



PLUS...
RAINBOW SIX VEGAS 2
DARK SECTOR
CONDEMNED 2



Issue 17 Out April 3rd

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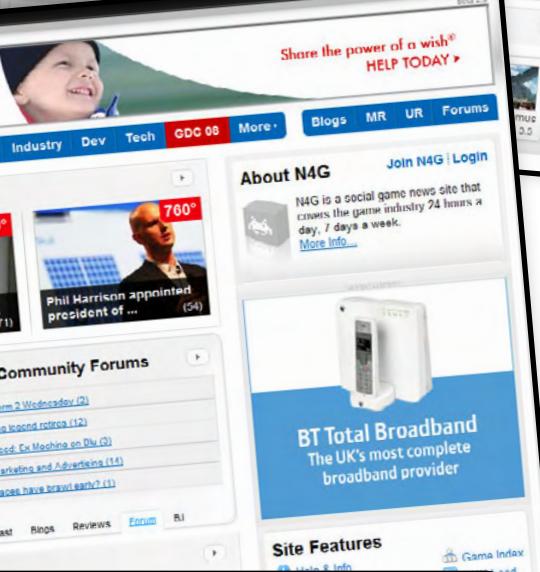
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